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IN MEMORIAM:

Chester Barlow.

BY HENRY REED TAYLOR.

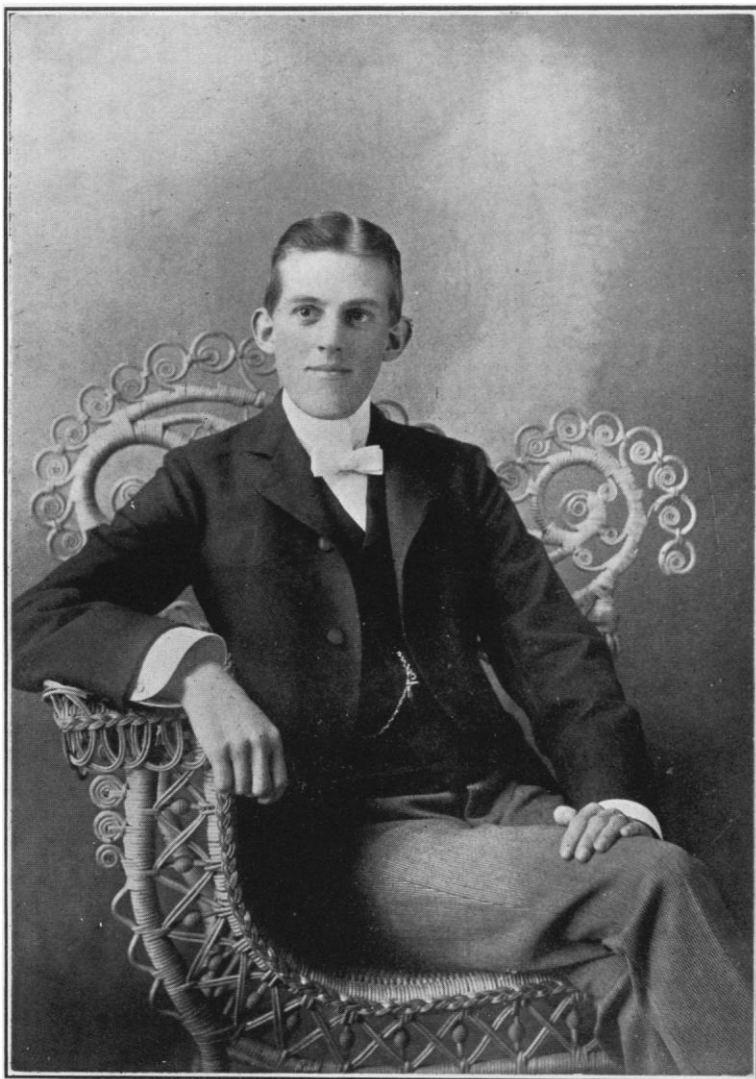
WORDS cannot tell, and the pen falters as a thing which is feeble and futile in an effort to express all that is comprehended in the simple words, "Barlow is gone."

If to live nobly life's allotted span, doing each day one's best in all things; turning aside from no task in the line of duty until it be accomplished; joyously and unselfishly striving until the end, in order that others might be benefited and share the full measure of happiness found in a true interpretation of Nature's manifold charms—if these and other lovable attributes point close to a perfect life, then may it be said that not in vain did Chester Barlow live.

His works, and the many seeds of kindness he delighted to scatter along the way, have not been lost to us who knew and loved him; and while he has passed on, and left in many a heart an aching void which cannot soon be comforted, there are lessons we have learned from him, treasured memories of an enthusiastic naturalist, a true-hearted gentleman and loyal, helpful friend, which time can never efface.

The sense of personal loss which we as club members feel cannot be lightly expressed. What the world of science and letters has missed in the passing of a student, observer and writer of such uncommon talents cannot be measured now, but we know that as his influence was broadening and uplifting upon all with whom he came in contact, so the unfolding of his mature mind, the revivifying of all that he touched, gave promise of great things in the future.

Certainly it may be said, a beacon light of ornithology on the West Coast glimmered fitfully and expired when the brave spirit of Chester Barlow left the world.



CHESTER BARLOW.

Died November 9, 1902.

In his active life, so filled and rounded with meritorious deeds, Mr. Barlow was loath to lay aside his work, even when the manifestations of the dread disease with which he was stricken should have counseled him to slacken his pace. When with him last summer in the Sierra, I urged him to lay aside all extra work and care for his health. He would be all right again soon, he said—all he needed was a little time.

After a brief but happy outing he returned to his duties as assistant cashier in the Santa Clara Valley Bank, where he labored on for nearly two months, still deceived as to the seriousness of his condition. When his employers finally obliged him to knock off work he went with his wife to Pacific Grove, hoping that the change would lead to an improvement. The end was not far distant, but he never seemed to realize it, and as he suffered no pain his own cheerfulness lulled the fears of those dear to him. To the last he was hopeful.

A week before his death he declared to Mr. Emerson that by the next week, surely, he would be able to take up the accumulated correspondence of the club, to which he had always attended so faithfully. He would not admit that he was ill enough to require another to take hold of the work or even assist him with it. When the end came, rather suddenly, his passing was peaceful, and fifteen minutes before, he had been helped up and had been sitting in a chair. In a beautiful rural spot, where perchance the white-tailed kite, of which he loved to tell us, may alight in the huge spreading live oaks about his grave, he lies at rest.

It will take some time to realize that he has taken his final journey: that he who disseminated, so lavishly, kindness, good cheer and fellowship; he whose cordial welcome and smile and jest added warmth and happiness to the meetings of our bird students, has really gone out of our life—a little farther on than we have traveled, and beyond the barrier o'er which we may not see, nor, hearkening hear a far "Halloo!" the jovial call of him who was our faithful comrade, our genial companion on many a woodland trail, through brake and fen, on the islands of the sea, or in mountain fastnesses where he loved to roam and ponder; where the birds are singing and calling, and in the silence wondering, mayhap, why he comes no more to those fair scenes he loved so well.

Now that we muse upon the personality of our good friend, from whom in the high administration of an omniscient Providence we have so soon and so sadly been parted, none can think of him, it is safe to say, save as one in a happy, cheerful mood. The mere mention of his name, the superscription of an old letter, recalls inevitably a smiling face, an occasion of good-humored banter; or, perhaps, one with quiet, intent manner, cheerful, unfailingly courteous, and eager of accomplishing an end. It is as a prince of good fellows that we love to remember Barlow, yet we admired his earnest bearing, his equable poise of character, and wondered at the seemingly boundless energy which influenced all his undertakings.

Scarcely more than a dozen years were devoted to studies in Ornithology before his bright career was brought to a close at the age of twenty-eight. From early excursions into the lore of birds, which aside from his home life and his friends was ever the subject dearest to him, he soon passed the experimental or juvenile stage and devoted himself assiduously in his leisure to the advancement of Ornithology on this Coast.

Of the work he has done, the value of his researches, it is not within the province of the present writer here to speak. Rather is it his high privilege to touch upon the life and personality of one whom, in the intimate intercourse of our club meetings, during a decade which has sped all too quickly, we feel it an

inspiration to have known so well; of one whose memory we cherish, in a sadness which comes again and again and will not be dissipated, holding it with all that is good and best upon the earth.

Mr. Barlow was born in San Jose, which was for so many years his home. He was graduated from the High School with exceptional honors, and subsequently entered the Santa Clara Valley Bank in Santa Clara, where he became practically indispensable to the management, being familiar with every branch of the work. His parents being dead he was early self-reliant. His studious disposition led to the collection of a considerable library, particularly of ornithological books. In addition to the painstaking editorial work he undertook, he joined a local lodge of Odd Fellows, in which he filled the chair of Noble Grand. He also found time for some months to attend to commercial correspondence for a firm of seed growers. He made many friends, and it was said of him that he had not an enemy in the world.

He delighted in trips afield and made many excursions into San Benito county and various sections of Santa Clara county in pursuit of his oological hobby, but during his later years he devoted much less time to collecting. He revelled in an opportunity to get away to the hills after golden eagle's eggs. Many a joyous tramp over hill and canyon has been enjoyed by the writer with Mr. Barlow. He was an expert climber and we shared in the secret of the location of a number of nests which were particularly hard to reach.

In the field he was a delightful companion, and always a keen observer. He made careful notes and took many photographs, which went to embellish the pages of magazines. His style was particularly pleasing, and thousands of bird students who have read his articles will feel a sense of personal loss at his passing from among us.

It seems scarcely necessary to say that Mr. Barlow was a charter member of the Cooper Ornithological Club. So much of its history, its steady growth in popularity and usefulness, is directly attributable to his untiring efforts and wise counsels that it is impossible to dissociate the man from the club which he, more than any other, did so much to perpetuate. It was always near to his heart, and with cheerful zeal, which commanded the admiration of all, he gave his time and talents to booming the meetings, booming the club and spreading the fame of its magazine, of which he was the highly talented editor until Death touched him gently and called him hence from earthly tasks well and nobly accomplished.

He never served as President of the club, but he was more than that. Often I have said to him, "Barlow, you *are* the club." He came very near that many times, and we who know the club's history and of all his labors for its advancement may place the honor where it is due. Others have done much, but our good friend was head and shoulders above any in the making of its fortunes.

No sooner was a meeting over than Mr. Barlow was planning for the next. As Secretary, from the organization's inception, he filled many offices in one. Modesty was one of his charming traits, and without hope of reward he accomplished great things. Unassuming, he never sought preferment, but knowing that some one must do the work he did it steadfastly, patiently, joyously. No discouragement balked him, for he entered heart and soul into his labors. He could never be spared from the office of Secretary, so important in a bird club with widely scattered membership, to accept the more or less honorary position of President. Through nearly ten years of arduous endeavor he never shirked a responsibility nor sought to shift the burden upon another's shoulders. It was

his delight to render hard, personal service in the club's behalf, and he left to others the nominal honors. As President he would have served well, and it would have given him pleasure, but if the thought occurred to him he put it aside with the unselfish feeling that his place was where the club most needed him. At the last meeting of the Cooper Club, held not long before his death, he was nominated for the Presidency of the club for 1903, an office he now can never hold.

The writer well recalls, amid a host of pleasant reminiscences, how he first had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Barlow in San Jose in the summer of 1893, but a few months after the Cooper Ornithological Club had been started by a few enthusiastic and youthful bird students of that vicinity. I was about to launch the *Nidologist* at Alameda, and hearing in some way of the club in Santa Clara county made the trip with a view to forming a sort of coalition.

I found that the club had six or seven members all told, but they were very much alive, among them being Chester Barlow, Wilfred H. Osgood, Harry R. Painton and Mr. Schneider. I attended a meeting at Painton's house at College Park after spending the day with Barlow and Osgood, and joined the club. The "Traveler and Naturalist," an unpretentious journal printed on a small hand press some where, was to have been made the official organ of the bird club, but the seven members voted unanimously in favor of adopting the "Nid." Thereafter the "Traveler and Naturalist," having lost the block of seven subscribers constituting the Cooper Club's membership ceased its travels, pined and died.

At that early meeting the discussion of exchange deals in eggs, made with certain eastern collectors by Osgood, Barlow and Schneider, and jovial collecting reminiscences, not to forget a generous collation, succeeded the "reading of scientific papers," among which, if I mistake not, there was one by Mr. Osgood on the "Nesting of the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher." That meeting was a red-letter occasion for the present writer, and led to a frequent correspondence with Mr. Barlow, then editor of the club's department in the *Nidologist*, which continued uninterrupted with mutual profit and enjoyment through the years, cementing a friendship in ties which became indissoluble, and which promised so much of happiness through life.

The relations of the club and the ornithological journal I then published, carried on through the medium of the genial Secretary, were always most pleasant, and proved helpful to the club and to the journal. The members early showed a cheerful disposition to aid the editor with photographs for illustration and with entertaining articles. Barlow wrote an article on the nidification of the cinnamon teal and the mallard duck. Schneider had a fine picture of a mallard's nest and eggs, but it seems he had promised it to the *Oologist*. It was *in situ*, and just what I wanted. Barlow and Osgood "labored" with Schneider and finally induced him to "loosen up" and supply the club's official organ with the coveted photograph, which after publication I ascertained was of a "home made" nest, which had been cunningly formed by Mr. Schneider himself in the grass near his house for photographic purposes.

How many good times we had at Barlow's home in San Jose! In those days when he was unmarried, and afterward in his pretty cottage at Santa Clara where his charming wife joined in extending hospitality to "bird cranks," his latch-string was always out for the "boys," and visiting ornithologists in the State were glad of an opportunity to seek out the Mecca of our bird students, where a cordial welcome was ever extended.

Barlow always "expected" his friends. No special invitation was necessary.

I recall vividly the experience of one night, which illustrates, if crudely, the sort of good fellow Mr. Barlow was with his friends. On bicycles with my younger brother-in-law, who had never met the Cooper Club's Secretary, I left Alameda one evening for a spin on the country road. Having reached Haywards we yielded to a sudden impulse to keep on to San Jose. The small change we had with us was soon spent for crackers and cheese by the wayside, and after a toilsome run of fifty miles we arrived in San Jose after 9 p. m., hungry, dusty as tramps, and broken in spirit and purse as well.

Barlow was our refuge. We prayed, very fervently, that Barlow might be at home. With trepidation we rang the bell. The landlady opened the door slightly and said, in response to our inquiry, that he was in Santa Clara. She did not know if Mr. Barlow would return before midnight, if then. Of course we said we were very sorry (we really were), that we had journeyed far to see Mr. Barlow, and felt deeply grieved at his absence.

"Did he expect you?" said the landlady.

"Oh yes, ma'am, yes indeed!" we unblushingly answered.

Then to our unspeakable relief she said we might come in and ascend to his room. We accepted the invitation with alacrity. We furthermore made ourselves very much at home—used his towels, ate of anything we found about, enjoyed his books, and when tired of waiting for him to arrive capped the climax by retiring to rest in his bed. When he came home he was most happy to discover we had taken possession, and wanted to insist on our visiting a restaurant at once for further refreshment. Then we slept, three in a bed, or slept when we ceased talking in jolly vein. I believe the bed came down in the middle of the night, but a little thing like that did not feaze us. Next morning we borrowed from our kindly host, who insisted on our staying longer, fares to return by train.

It is the fraternal feeling in the Cooper Club, the jollity and sociability which our friend did so much to foster, that has united so closely its members, encouraging them to travel over 100 or 125 miles on the round trip to attend a meeting. It is our happiness to know that this spirit survives and will long continue.

Mr. Barlow was ever ready to give information to younger fellows anxious to learn, and no one can enumerate how many such he has aided in many ways and induced to become members of our club. Some of these have since become writers and ornithologists of note.

The mystery and grandeur of the Sierra Nevada mountains held him in a spell which grew upon him year by year, and in those wonderful mountain ranges he did his last work. The nests and eggs or the birds he might collect or record in that interesting region were subordinate to the love he felt for the wonder of the great woods, the songs of the birds of the wild, high Sierra he knew so well.

So I have seen him on his last expedition to the Pracerville-Tahoe trail, reposing beneath some forest giant on the mountain side, and lost in happy reveries, while he enjoyed it all supremely; and there was a look upon his face as though across the great, dark canyons, and over beyond, he saw a fairer land, a land where the birds still rapturously sing, and a brooding peace awaits all those who keep their hearts sweetly in tune with the glories of the world, which seen aright, point the way to harmonies celestial and eternal.